

July 4, 2008
Friday of the Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

Amos 8:4-6, 9-12

Psalms 119:2, 10, 20, 30, 40, 131

Matthew 9:9-13

*Go and learn the meaning of the words,
□I desire mercy, not sacrifice.*

I believe that this often takes a lifetime to learn. It is not a lesson easily learned by the young. The years of our youth are all about justice. In any conversation among young children, if we listen long enough, we will hear those famous words, 'it's not fair.' But justice is often me getting my rightful share of the spoils or me getting even for what has been done against me. Mercy requires a softened heart, a heart willing to bend enough to make room for another's pain. Mercy doesn't insist on anything. Mercy leaves room for error and ignorance and especially forgiveness. It allows for imperfection and mistakes. It gives second chances. It acknowledges the good while it challenge the injustice. It no longer sees the world or people as black and white, Mercy requires us to live in the gray areas of life, where decisions are less clear and certainty is out of reach—where life is messy. I look at Jesus' life and I see a life of mercy. He did not exact payment for sin nor did he point a finger of blame at the sinner. He simply loved and healed and forgave, and nourished all who came to him. All were welcome to approach him and follow him. He turned no one away and he opened his heart to everyone—even those considered unacceptable by the standards of the time. Who might that be today? Who do we judge and turn away and consider unworthy? Who do we blame? What judgments do we make about others? Where are we in need of this lesson?

Go and learn the meaning of the words...

When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace.

□--Jimi Hendrix